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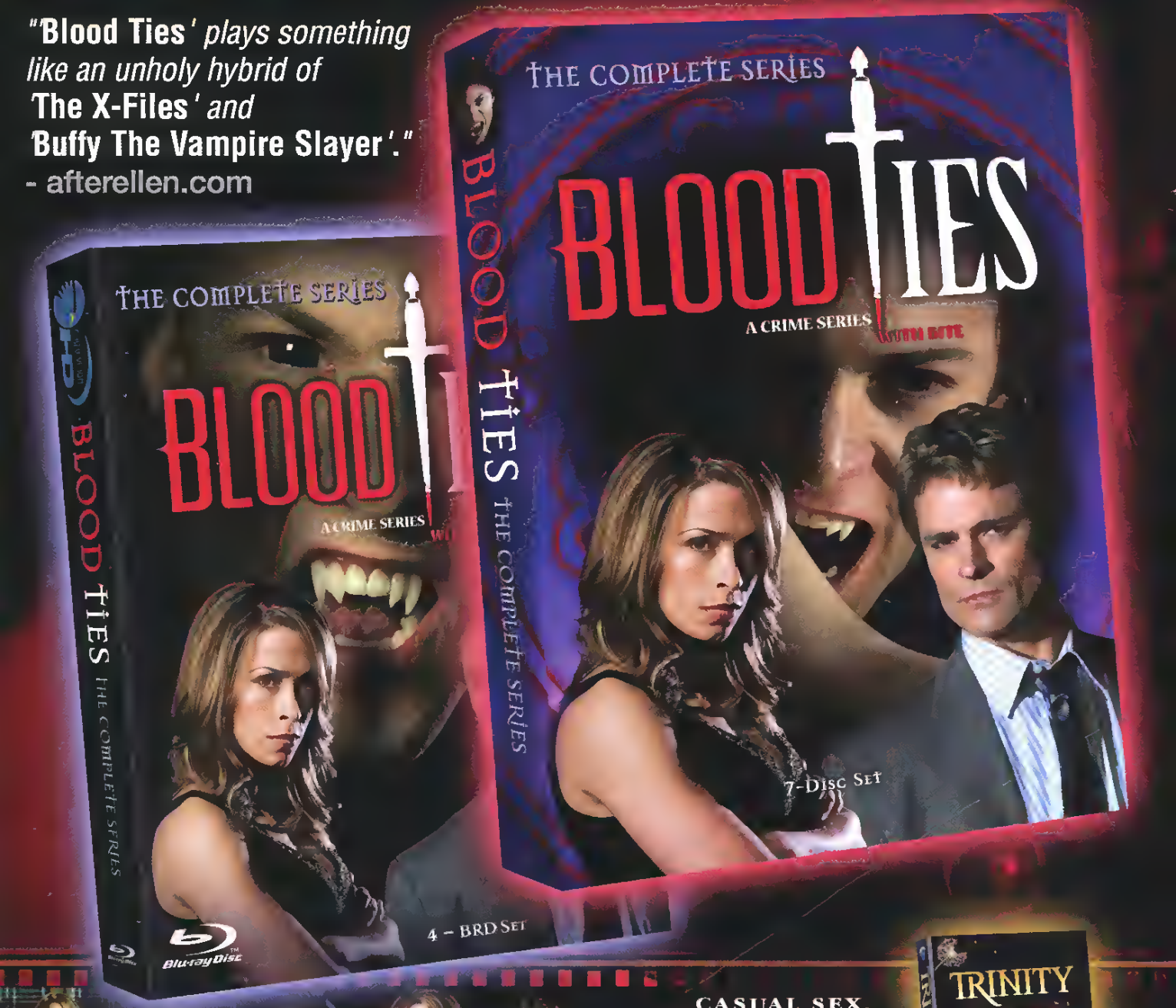
DAY OF THE DEAD

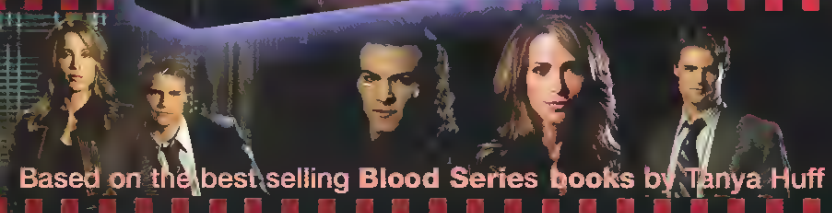
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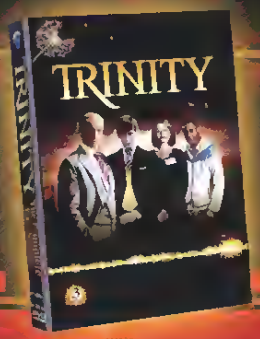


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*All articles written by Aaron Crowell and Nathan Hanneman, unless specifically stated otherwise

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ON THE COVER: Celebrating 25 Years of Day of the Dead!

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:

This past November we issued the very first *HorrorHound* special issue - an event program for our Cincinnati convention featuring Elvira and boasting 16 pages of content revolving around the guests and events scheduled for that weekend. But for our Indianapolis event, we thought it was appropriate to deliver something with a bit more meat! What you hold in your hands is our second official special issue - with 32 pages of new content and for convention-goers, one of our favorite articles from the past: How to Survive a Horror Convention (a bit modified since it originally ran back in 2007). We attempted to capture the excitement of *HorrorHound Magazine* in a smaller package - including our Fantasm section, special pull-out poster (by Joel Robinson) and an exciting retrospective celebrating the 25th anniversary of George A. Romero's *Day of the Dead* We hope you enjoy this small (yet powerful) bite of *HorrorHound*!

Nathan Hanneman (Editor-in-Chief)



Carefully pull beck the center-cut staple ends from this program's center spread (but do not remove them). Once pulled back, carefully remove the center spread (poster) featuring the Slashers of the 1980s. Once removed, the now-center two-page spread (pages 14 and 19) will be revealed as a horror host event poster. Remove it. Once both "posters" are removed you can bend back the staple ends to their original state. Now you have two 11x17 sealed posters to get signed, frame and hang, or pin to your bedroom wall!

REVISITED: THEN AND NOW

Since *HorrorHound*'s inception we have played a fun game we dubbed "Then and Now," comparing classic film posters to their remake counterparts. Often posters have A, B, and C style art. We thought it would be fun to revisit some of the films we have featured in past issues - utilizing their alternate US poster art instead. Which B posters kick more ass or feature more iconic imagery? Let's find out!



We originally paired The Crazies [illegible] shot-up street sign. A bloody push fork still doesn't compete!



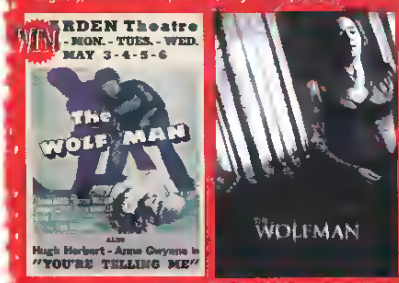
For this pairing we look at the original A Nightmare on Elm Street and the remake B poster. Sorry Freddy ... original still wins!



That buzzing chainsaw busting through a door would win most any Then and Now contest. Especially this bout!



Originally filmed in 1964 as The Last Man on Earth (or I Am Legend), the new film's poster conveyed that point a bit better.



To be fair we posted B posters for The Wolf Man's original and recent remake. Both are okay, but the original STILL wins out.

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HORRORHOUND SALUTES: MAGNOLIA'S MAGNET RELEASING

by Aaron Crowell

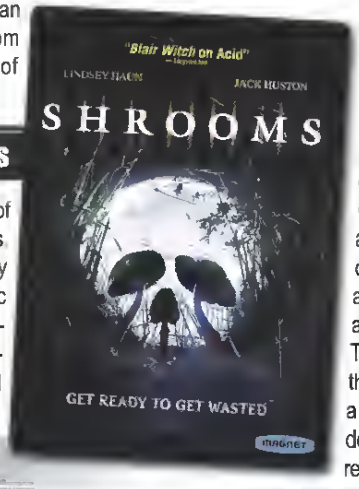
Magnolia Pictures was formed in 2001 by Bill Banowsky and Eamonn Bowles, and specializes in both foreign and independent films. The slow buzz surrounding Magnolia Pictures' foray into horror began back in 2002 when the company teamed with Microsoft to screen the first theatrical release of the full-length independent horror film titled *Wendigo*, using the groundbreaking Windows Media "Corona" Technology. In 2006 the company took notice of the ever-growing interest and success in the realm of foreign horror, especially in regards to Asian cinema, and released the creepy J-Horror movie titled *Kairo* (aka *Pulse*) to DVD in February of '06. The following year Magnolia Pictures hit pay dirt with two foreign films they championed to rave reviews. The first was the talk of the 2006 Cannes International Film Festival, a smart dramatic Korean monster movie directed by Joon-ho Bong titled *The Host*, which was later issued to DVD and marked Magnolia Home Entertainment's first horror Blu-ray release. The second, a gory British office themed horror comedy directed by Christopher Smith, titled *Severance*, made its US DVD debut months later also under the MHE label.

Magnolia began to receive critical acclaim for their bold foreign genre-bending releases and documentaries. On September 11, 2007, they announced the launch of Magnet, a new division of their unique and expanding film distribution business co-owned by Todd Wagner and Mark Cuban. This new division would specialize in the wild, unquantifiable and uncompromised cinema fare that the company was becoming known for. Under the Magnet label, the company has provided a diverse offering of strange and fantastic movies for the better part of the past two years. Many of these titles receiving theatrical release courtesy of Magnolia Pictures and Magnet Releasing, as their theatrical and home entertainment distribution arm is made up of a vertically integrated group of media properties co-owned by Todd and Cuban including: the Landmark Theatres chain, production companies 2929 Productions and HDNet Films, and high-definition cable networks HDNet and HDNet Movies. As a result, many of the Magnet Releasing titles have received first-run airings (*Surveillance* and *District 13: Ultimatum*) exclusively on HDNet Movies even before receiving DVD and BD release.



Murder Party

The first horror release to be branded with the Magnet logo was *Murder Party* in October of 2007, a fun, sly comedic-slasher film by writer/director Jeremy Saulnier that was honored with the Audience Award at the 2007 Slamdance Film Festival, the Best Feature Award at the 2007 Vail Film Festival, as well as an official selection at the SXSW Film Festival. The movie follows a timid man who finds a random invitation to a Halloween party that leads to an evening of murder, madness and pumpkin raisin bread.



Shrooms

Magnet followed up with the March 2008 release of Paddy Breathnach's Irish slasher/survival title, *Shrooms*. When five college friends travel to Ireland, the party obsessed group set out on a forest-wide search for magic mushrooms, only what they find is far more bizarre and terrifying than anything a bad trip could offer. The film is widely overlooked and over-analyzed by critics, but considered a true diamond in the rough by many including this writer.

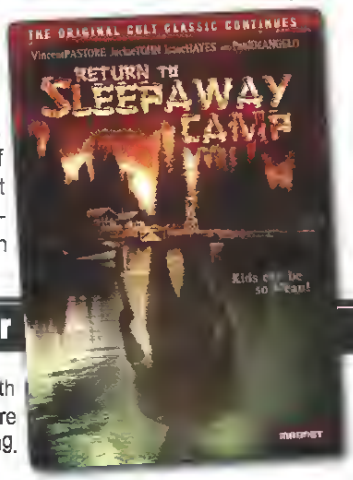
The Signal

In June 2008 the ambitious title *The Signal* received a limited theatrical run followed by DVD and Blu-ray (the first Magnet BD) release. Told in three parts from three unique perspectives by three visionary directors, *The Signal* was originally conceived as an experimental film project called Exquisite Corpse where one filmmaker would begin a story, then hand it off to another filmmaker to continue, and then to another, and so on until the movie was complete. The picture became more of an anthology that follows several people who are attempting to survive and rescue loved ones from a deadly hypnotic digital signal that seems to have a murderous effect on the masses.



Return to Sleepaway Camp

The long overdue and unneeded chapter in the '80s slasher film franchise *Sleepaway Camp*, aptly titled *Return to Sleepaway Camp*, hit DVD in November of 2008, thanks to Magnet. While the film received poor reviews, it was written and directed by Robert Hiltzik (the writer/director of *Sleepaway Camp* who also wrote all the sequels), and did star original cast alumni Felissa Rose and Jonathan Tiersten. To be fair, I think fans of this series should give it a viewing before condemning it based on reviews alone.



Splinter

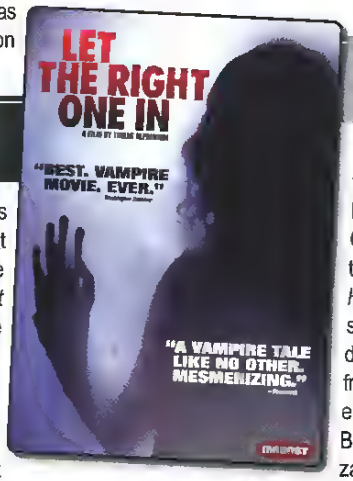
Splinter received a Magnet release with a limited theatrical run in October '08 before appearing on DVD and BD in early 2009.

Fun Fact: *Magnet plans to release George A. Romero's recent film effort Survival of the Dead to theaters and DVD/BD.*



Hailed as the most overlooked movie of 2009 by many horror fans across the Web, *Splinter* proves a very unique monster movie to say the least. When the fates of two couples collide, they are faced with the ultimate test of survival as they attempt to hide out in an isolated gas station, only time is not on their side.

Let the Right One In



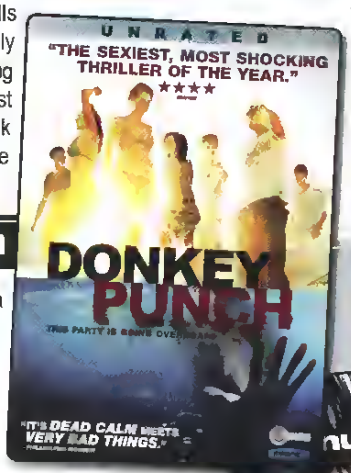
Magnet has come under some heat concerning their release of, the often considered best horror film of 2008, *Let The Right One In*. Long after the limited theatrical run of the film, the DVD and BD were both released on March 10, 2009, with tragically altered subtitles, removing integral subtleties, nuances and humor. While this had little effect on those who had not seen the original theatrical version of the film, it was passionately vocalized by many fans who felt Magnet had to make amends and rerelease the DVD and BD in an effort to rectify this error. The Tomas Alfredson-directed Swedish vampire tale follows a young boy and his newfound female companion's blossoming friendship that serves as a pleasant distraction from their otherwise troubled existence. An absolute must-see horror movie for any fan of the genre.



Timecrimes

Timecrimes (released to DVD in March of 2009) truly kicks sand over the lines separating genres. A Spanish film that deals with the pitfalls of time travel, not really horror, not totally Sci-Fi, it does feature a thrilling story that is fascinating to say the least, and has more twist and turns than a salted pretzel. Who is the man with the pink bandaged face on the cover and what has he done? See *Timecrimes* and figure out this complex film.

Donkey Punch

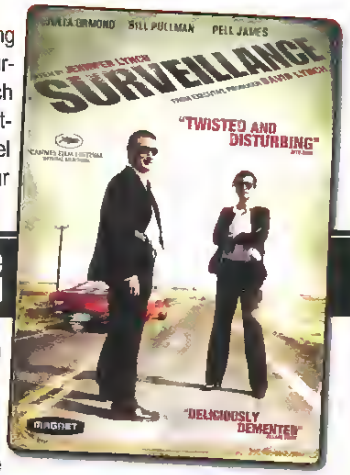


Donkey Punch is not just a sex joke anymore, now it is a thrilling UK movie released to DVD this past April 2009 thanks to Magnet. The story follows a group of seven young adults, for whom the party never seems to end. Or does it? A horrible accident aboard a luxury yacht in open water leads to a ruthless struggle for survival. You know you want to see this one!

Surveillance

Director of *Boxing Helena* and daughter of David Lynch, Jennifer Chambers Lynch released her crime thriller *Surveillance*, first appearing on HDNet Movies, this past year, then released to DVD and BD in August 2009.

The story follows two FBI agents working on a string of unsolved, gruesome murders occurring across a desolate stretch of desert highway. This entertainingly gritty film that stars cinema greats Michael Ironside and Bill Pullman is worth your time.



Not Quite Hollywood

Released both theatrically and to DVD and BD in October of 2009 in the US, *Not Quite Hollywood: The Wild, Untold Story of OZploitation!* is still making waves to this day. This Australian/American documentary film by Mark Hartley blasts you with images from some of the strangest Australian exploitation films to ever assault the optic nerve. Free-wheeling sex romps! Blood-soaked terror tales! High-octane action extravaganzas! They're the main ingredients of *Not Quite Hollywood*, the first detailed examination and celebration of Australian cinema of the '70s and '80s. Packed with interviews galore from filmmakers such as Quentin Tarantino, Brian Trenchard-Smith, George Miller and stars from these crazy flicks. Cassandra Delaney, Jamie Lee Curtis, Dennis Hopper, and Steve Railsback, just to name a few. This is a must-see, must-own, title that all fans of over-the-top cinema should not bear to be without.



Magnolia and Magnet's dedication to reaching out to us ravenous cinephiles with a nearly impeccable track record of theatrical, DVD, and BD releases is easily worthy of *HorrorHound*'s salute to excellence! You can be sure that the Magnet logo on the cover of a DVD carries a level of quality, prestige and distinction to it. Now go, hunt them down and enjoy!

*Other notable Magnet titles include *Sick Nurses*, *Shuttle*, *Red*, *Eden Log* and *The Canyon*.



Fun Fact: *Most of the films featured in this article were screened at past HorrorHound Weekend events - including Murder Party, Shrooms, The Signal, Timecrimes, Let the Right One In and Shuttle.*

HOW TO SURVIVE A HORROR CONVENTION

A HORRORHOUND'S GUIDE TO EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ATTENDING YOUR NEXT HORROR CONVENTION

Originally published in *HorrorHound* #7, "How to Survive a Horror Convention" follows a very simple idea — after visiting dozens of shows over the past few years, (and putting on our own) the *HorrorHound* staff compiled a list of tricks, tips and warnings for anyone who has yet to visit one of these weekend celebrations - or just a fun read for those of us who have been to more than our fair share. We cover it all, from figuring out what you need before you make your trek to the dealers/celebrities you may want to avoid. We also want to ensure you get your full money's worth out of the event: from hitting the Q&A sessions, movie screenings ad scoring all of the autographs you want. After producing seven conventions to date, we find this article to be more helpful than ever - and we hope everyone who reads it will agree. Below is a list of ideas that, while need not be followed to a tee, may help your next show experience to be a pleasant one. Think we missed something important? E-mail mail@horrohound.com and tell us your helpful hints and stories! Who knows - we may print them in our next event special - due this November at our Cincinnati *HorrorHound Weekend* spectacular!

The first step to surviving a horror convention, and maybe the most important - know what to bring! Stock everything in your backpack and/or poster tubes: food, camera, money (your credit card), pens, comfortable shoes, deodorant, and don't forget your collectibles (assuming you're bringing anything to get signed)!

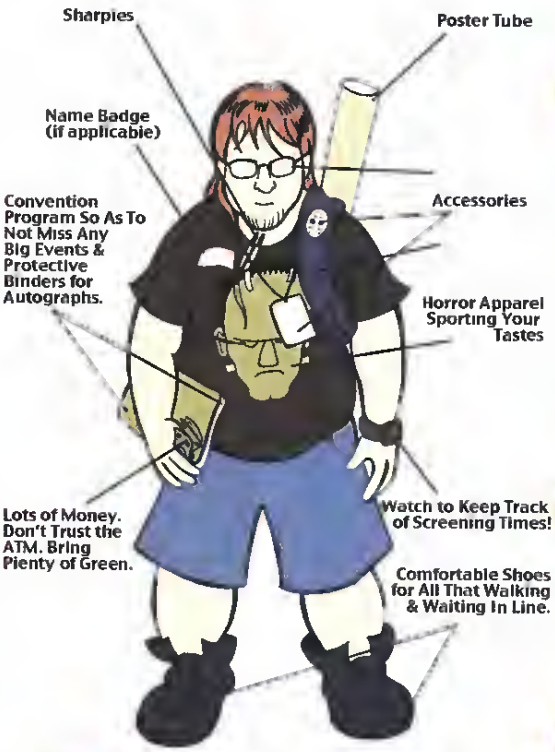
Bring bags (or a backpack). Dealers often run out of bags or don't bring any at all. If you plan on buying lots of goodies, plan on making trips to the car or your hotel room - or have that bag ready to roll!

Paying for autographs may seem ridiculous to some, but generally the celebrities are not being paid to attend the convention. They make up the cost of their time by charging for their John Hancock. Otherwise, they could be hanging out with their family, watching a movie or working on one.

Most hotels or convention centers hosting a show will have an ATM in the lobby. However, most banks do not anticipate the heavy usage of these machines. Typically, the ATM will run out of funds long before the end-of-day on Saturday. Hotels usually will not give out change which leaves a road-trip to the nearest bank as your only option. If you plan on spending a lot of dough, try and line your pockets with green prior to the event!



THE QUINTESSENTIAL HORROR FAN



Now that you have money and are well prepared to pay for autographs, remember this hint: don't haggle. It's embarrassing and awkward. Celebrities rarely change their price, and you may have just ruined a special moment in your life. Some celebrities may charge more than you are willing to pay. If you're not happy, simply walk away.

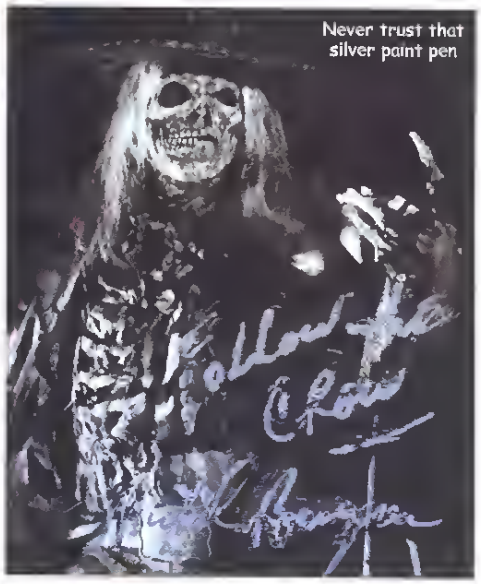
Be careful of those prima donna-type celebrities and models at the convention. In rare cases, you will be asked to pay for simply taking their picture. This is plain rude! Ask to speak with the promoter and try to talk yourself out of the situation, or avoid it altogether by asking permission for photographs beforehand.

Take control when obtaining an autograph! You are paying for the signature, so you have an invested interest in where it goes and how it looks! Most celebrities carry multiple colored Sharpies and markers. Pick the color you want (or bring your own), plop down your picture or poster and point specifically at where you want the signature! A black signature on a black poster isn't very funny.

Beware the silver paint pen! One of the most common causes of travesty in the autograph world is the slow-drying silver paint pen. In most cases, the ink will smear against the hand of the celebrity as he or she passes the picture back to you. Posters? Be careful! A freshly-signed poster can roll back up on you and cause the ink to stick to the back of the poster, and it can peel off and ruin not just the signature, but the poster itself. Don't lay wet signatures on top of each other and don't slide them into cases for protection without ensuring a dry sig! Top loader protective holders and silver paint pens should never meet. We actually suggest avoiding the silver altogether!

Make sure you hand the celebrity the correct item you wish to have autographed. A friend of *HorrorHound* handed the wrong poster to a celebrity which ended in an amusing fashion, although upsetting at the same time. There is nothing like having a *Scream* poster signed by Thomas Jane (*Punisher*).

Do not expect to bring in a wheeled cart. Horror shows aren't known for their multiple-



Did You Know? *Most horror conventions average 2,000-6,000 attendees over a three-day period of time.*

autograph opportunities (considering the cost-per-sig), however, if you have large amounts of items to get signed, various (and calculated) trips to your car are encouraged - or get a room in the convention's hotel.

Speaking of hotels - we urge convention-goers to get a room in the show's hotel. After-hour activities are usually planned, and lobby bars open till the A.M. hours. Otherwise, you'll be hearing about the after-hour events and probably be a little jealous. This is a sure-fire way to make sure you don't miss out. Plus, one lunch gone wrong and you will be glad you have a room to retreat to.

Hotel room costs are usually cheaper if you stay at the hotel hosting the convention. Shows are given special room rates. If the hotel sells out, the room rate special may extend past that particular hotel. Call to find out the next closest place to stay or any other hotel hosting the special rate. Don't waste time either, most event special rates are a limited-time deal, and waiting till the last moment will probably cost you some extra dough - money you could have used to get that special autograph or collectible.

Try not to bring large bills unless you plan on spending large amounts with one dealer. Dealers work with five and single dollar bills more than anything and finding change in the hotel by the end of the weekend could be murder.

Go to the convention Web site prior to the show (we suggest a few weeks to mentally prepare yourself) and go over the guest list. If you are an autograph hound - then check out imdb.com to cross-reference who's who and what movies they were in. Sure, Tom Noonan was in *Manhunter* - but did you remember his role as Frankenstein's Monster in *The Monster Squad*? Make a checklist.

On top of checking out guest lists, most conventions give a full list of events, such as Q&A sessions or panels. These are great ways to interact with the celebrities if you have no intention of getting autographs.



Shows do NOT guarantee a celebrity's appearance. Most cases, the convention is planned around a deal that features an escape clause for the celebrity. In most cases, these clauses are only utilized when a movie role comes up (filming) or due to sickness. Try not to hold the promoter responsible - they are as upset as you are.

Cancellations always happen. Keep an eye on the show's Web site to find out who is going to be there and who had to bail. Some shows will even add guests to make up for cancelled ones. You may suddenly find yourself excited about a celebrity you originally had no clue would be attending.

Don't rush the celebrity. Check out the official show Web site to locate signing times. They may be in attendance all three days and you might be able to take that one-hour Friday wait in line down to 15 minutes on Sunday morning.

Early admission is key! It costs just a little extra, but the benefits are so great! The show opens to early-attendees (average an hour), which allows you to loop around the dealer room before it becomes overly crowded.

Speaking of admission - check out admission costs online. Sometimes a convention will offer discounted ticket prices to potential-attendees. These prices often rise as the show comes closer, and on the day of the event, they may sell out altogether! If you know you are attending, just go ahead and pre-order!

Need ideas when getting an autograph? Most people have no idea what they want signed, only that they WANT to get something signed. The *HorrorHound* staff enjoys scouting shows months in advance to prepare ourselves via eBay! Original one-sheet movie posters, action figures and rare stills or lobby cards are fun. Finding 11x17" prints of movie posters saves space and looks nifty in your collection as well.

Just remember - spending $100 in autographs on an original *Phantasm* poster you paid $100 for does NOT make your poster worth $200. It could make it worth more, but if your intent is to add value to a collectible - then use your head. Tobe Hooper hardly attends shows. Bill Moseley is a convention veteran. Your value-per-signature increases with rarity (and lack of personalization). But we suggest getting sigs for yourself. It does better for the esteem.

Validity of an autograph is proven by a photo of the celebrity signing. COAs are near useless. If the sole use of a signature is for resale - we urge you not to. But if you must... take pictures.

The celebrity may not be willing to take a photograph. If 200 people got their photos taken within a couple hours, the celebrity's eyes may be VERY sore. Don't get upset, if the celebrity wishes to not have his or her photo taken. If you plan on getting a photo, and you are by yourself, then ask the person behind you to take your pic. If they say no, then that just sucks.

Actors are usually fine with having photographs taken, but you don't even need to ask about filming a celebrity on your camcorder. They will say "NO!" We just saved you some time. Most shows do not even allow camcorders or filming equipment onto the main floor without prior written consent. Best leave the camera in your car.

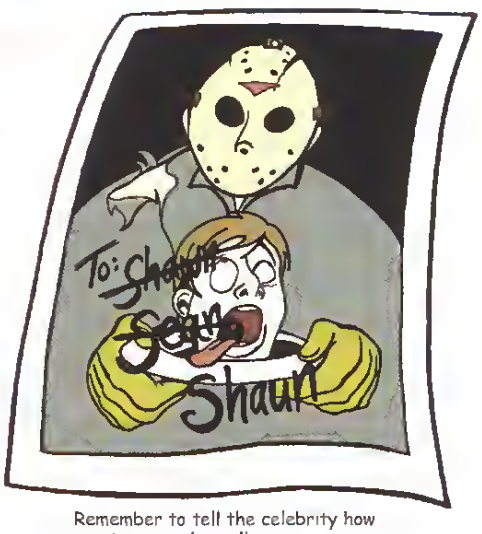
Clam-shells scratch and paint chips! If you are getting an action figure signed, try to get the cardboard backer signed. And be very careful!

Think while you are in line. Don't daydream (if you can help it). Be prepared for that glorious





Keep track of what's going on at your local show by visiting the convention Web site and reading posted signs



Remember to tell the celebrity how to properly spell your name

Did You Know? *From 2006 to 2009 the San Diego Comic-Con has pulled over 125,000 attendees. The maximum capacity for the event.*

moment when you meet your celebrity. Have something to say? Practice in your head ... it will be fun. Also be sure to scout the photos laid out upon the table to decide which still or sig you want. Bringing your own item? Have it ready!

Mindless conversation is annoying. Try not to invite celebrities to dinner, out for drinks or to come to your house. Sure, it may work sometimes, but how often does a perfect stranger ask you out to dinner after only just meeting them? Awkward!!! Plus, holding the line up is a bit unfair to the rest of the attendees. Do you enjoy being in lines?

Don't try to give celebrities your movie scripts. It's a waste of time.

They heard it a million times. George Romero may hate running zombies just as much as you, but imagine how many times a fan has asked him about it since 2004? Think a little. We aren't trying to dissuade you from asking or talking - just use your smarts when considering conversation fodder.

Don't be an ass. Do you know a dirty little secret about a celebrity you overheard or read on the Internet? Try to be nice. We are sure Kane Hodder does not appreciate being asked about his non-participation in the latest *Friday the 13th* feature - so please refrain from asking him about it or any other embarrassing celebrity gossip.

It is good etiquette to purchase an autograph when asking a celebrity for a picture. It is also suggested not to approach the celebrity while they are outside of the convention, walking around, eating or talking to their friends. That is what their table is for. Saying "Hi" is okay, though.

Know what you are buying? Most celebrities charge between $15 and $25 per sig. Figure out your budget in advance. If you get some great deals at the show, you might even bring home a little extra cash.



Buying signed 8x10" photos? Your local Wal-Mart, has three-ring binders and full-page sleeves; this may be the best way to carry and collect your newly signed souvenirs. Just be sure not to put wet autographs in their place before they dry!

Make sure the celebrity knows how to spell your name. Sean, Shawn, Shaun ... the celebrity doesn't know your exact spelling, so speak up before pen hits paper.

Personalized, generic signature or movie quote? Decide on a quote prior to getting in line. The celebrity may not remember all the lines from their past film work, and may be limited to one phrase that every other attendee also received. Keep the quotes short or abbreviated.

When walking away from the celebrity you may be a little star struck, it happens to the best of us. Just remember to grab your autographed photo as you leave. Many people we have talked to have left their merch behind at least once.

Is this the first appearance of the celebrity? They may not have something cool to sign. Show veterans always have awesome photos. Newbies don't. So don't get mad - just think ahead. If you get to the celebrity and find nothing worth signing, you may be able to find a dealer with 8x10" prints for sale at the show.

Need merch to get signed? You can always search the con floor. Posters, photos, and toys are always on hand at the show. Dealers will usually carry guest-related merch for the occasion. A good buy we have found are 11x17" movie poster prints, which have become more popular over the years.

Celebrities may leave early on Sunday. Try not to rely on that last-minute autograph. Sometimes an early flight results in a limited engagement or something else out of the celebrity/promoter's control may cause early departure to occur. Never speculate.



There are two basic types of conventions, simply put, there are cons where guests sit at a table all weekend to meet and greet fans (we will call this type A) and there are cons where the guests attend Q&A sessions, sign for a short time (if at all, we will call this type B), and then go on their merry way. Do some research before attending the con to find out what type of convention it is, so there are no surprises once you arrive! Forums discussing past shows are usually good places to gather information.

Type B conventions usually offer incentive passes which are the sole means of obtaining autographs of top tier celebrities, such as Clive Barker or Bruce Campbell. Most times these celebrities sign for free, but limit you on how many items they will sign. In type B conventions, not ALL celebrities sign for free, just those contracted with the promoter to do so. Do not expect every celebrity in attendance to sign for free, and unless you are a premier ticket holder (which does cost extra), do not expect to see every celebrity attending the show.

Type B conventions also sport special events, such as Q&As or panels for big guests, and even special photo opportunities. In most cases, these shows charge extra for these perks. Make sure you do your homework prior to the convention, so you don't miss out on anything!

Do not use the Q&A sessions as your personal forum for stupid questions or tasteless inquiries. Keep in mind, a couple hundred people are watching you, so don't be an ass.

Screening rooms are like the movie theater. It isn't your buddy's house. No talking, no going through your bags, or using the room as a meeting ground for your friends. Most people in the screening rooms are there to watch the movie.



Artwork by Travis Falligant

Definition: *SWAG. Stuff We All Get, or more accurately, promotional items/posters given away by studios.*

Are you a horror forum junkie? Adding value to your show experience by urging your fellow online horror pals to join you in your weekend fun is always recommended. They may resist, but blunt objects are great for convincing them otherwise.

People make rounds . . others do not. If you are looking for something special and see it, you may be better off buying it in the now. You spot that rare action figure, and you know you are going to buy it; we have seen it a million times: you wait and wait and then it sells before you come back. Sometimes it's okay to jump the gun on your first go round!

New items should not be price-gouged! The latest NECA toy line should NOT cost $30 a figure at a convention. Spencers has it for under $20, and they are in no short demand. Or are they? Do your research prior!

Do not get into arguments with dealers over their prices. You may be able to haggle a little, but not on Friday and Saturday. The more you spend with a dealer, the better your potential discount. Sundays are important dump-days for dealers (as are last-hour Saturday nights). Dealers may take less as the clock tics down.

Every convention has its fair share of bootleggers with the latest theatrical release or foreign film yet to see American distribution. They seem to always find their way into a show, and while it's technically illegal - fans get excited about what potential films they can pick up before the masses. While we can't stop you from buying them, we can help you from being ripped off. Ensure that you can watch the film prior to buying it. If the dealer doesn't have a DVD player hooked up, find one that does and ask to utilize their player for your needs. If the dealers are unwilling to help you prove the quality is worth your money - then walk away. Be sure to ask questions. Where did the print come from? Is it presented in its original aspect ratio? Try to be smart - if this is your first show and you get tempted by that bootleg copy of *Terror Vision* or *Willard* on DVD . . you may want to ask an outside source their thoughts on particular discs. The movie you are about to buy may be a couple months from being released properly to the masses, making your purchase a waste.

Every HorrorHound likes horror shirts! Many of the companies' shirts you have seen in the pages of *HorrorHound* are continually available at shows. HorrorShirts.com, Fright-Rags.com, Punkstuff.com - the dealers at these shows always have a good supply of the hottest tees on the market. Just make sure you find the one you want early and buy buy buy! Your size always seems to sell out by Sunday! Especially XXXL!

SWAG! Most shows have a freebie table that features those cool promo items which *HorrorHound* always loves to promote in-print. Whether it be coasters, posters or postcards ... make sure you keep your eyes open. Some shows even support contests or give-aways for larger items like shirts, hats and even DVDs.



Remember those after-hour events, parties and late night bar runs we mentioned? Pace yourself - try not to drink too much, have too much fun, or embarrass yourself in front of your fellow convention-goers and celebrities. The next day you may regret it all . especially if a hangover causes you to miss half of the show.

Note the rules of the show. They are normally posted on the official show Web site prior to the event. Liquids on the show floor, food, animals, loud music and video cameras are usually no-nos.

Treat the show hotel with respect. You are the example the hotel bases future business on. Pulling fire alarms, placing stickers on the walls, vomiting in elevators, ruining furniture and being an ass just causes the promoter of the show to have a difficult time working out deals for future shows. Don't play into stereotypes. Disprove them!

Treat your fellow convention-goer with respect. The shows get crowded, so be prepared and be forgiving of all those bumps and hits. Protect your own gear and be safe. And please, if you are a three-day attendee ... try to bring deodorant. That third day stank is something awful! Don't know what we're talking about? You are lucky.

Surprise, but most male horror fans are attracted to girls. Especially if dressed up in a gothic or over-the-top attire. You may get asked to have your picture taken, or worse. Just be aware of what you are wearing.

Theft is a problem no matter where you are. Be mindful of your fellow convention-goer and dealers. Every show has security, if you see something hurting your fellow HorrorHound - tell someone. At the same time, never leave your stuff on tables, keep your camera around your neck and make sure you keep your bag/backpack on your person. Recheck your personal inventory periodically.

Dressing up at conventions is always fun. Just make sure you are allowed to do so. And keep in mind, once you enter that showroom floor, you instantly become an attraction and will be asked by numerous people for photos. Just don't bring crowds or chaos to the point that you are causing problems for the vendors and/or celebrities. Make sure you bring a guide, as your vision may be impaired.

Food is always important, and most horror conventions do not include lunch or snack bars/booths. The hotel sometimes serves food via an in-house diner or room service, but the costs could be more than you can bare. Parking is often an issue at times during a show, and in most cases, attendees will not want to leave the premises. Remember: Just because you have a spot, that doesn't guarantee you will have one when you come back. Most hotels carry an array of delivery menus from local restaurants (pizza is the go-to conventioneers' food due to show hours). If you have a hotel room, this will come in handy, and give you a better shot at actually eating after the show ends (note show times online prior to leaving for the weekend). Packing snacks, lunch and drinks are also good suggestions.

Special thanks to Kenny Nelson, Sean Clark, Damien Glonek, Ken Kish and every single promoter, dealer, fan and fiend who ever crossed paths with us during the last 15 years and dozens of conventions. Even to the jerks - you helped give this guide relevance. A special thanks to Travis Falligant for giving this article some artistic life. ~ Nathan Hanneman and Aaron Crowell



Definition: *HorrorHound (Hor • ror • Hound): 1. A die hard horror movie fan. 2. A horror fan with an obsessive compulsive disorder pertaining to collecting horror-related items (toys, posters, DVDs, etc.).*


THE OFFICIAL
VAMPIRA
HORROR HOST TRIBUTE EVENT!
Photos provided by Michael Monahan

IN LOVING MEMORY
A FINAL INTERNVIEW WITH MAILA NURMI

by Michael Monahan with Sandy Clark



Michael Monahan with Maila Nurmi

It was 2004, 50 years after Vampira debuted on KABC, single-handedly creating a genre that would flourish in television markets across the country for over three decades. I traveled to Los Angeles with Sandy Clark, writer/producer of *American Scary*, the first comprehensive documentary on the subject of TV horror hosts, to interview Maila Nurmi, birth-mother to the hundreds of ghostly hosts who followed.

We were both aware of Maila's reputation for difficulty, born from her own private eccentricities, soured business deals, and decades of strange fanboy stalkers. Arriving with flowers, we chatted socially for half an hour prior to the interview, giving Maila an opportunity to relax and discuss topics of the here and now - including her status as "old lady," the limits imposed by age, her small circle of friends, and her favorite donut shop.

The following are excerpts from our two hour conversation with a complex and powerful woman. Despite our initial concerns, this was one of the warmest, most fascinating and meaningful interviews of the entire *American Scary* project. Maila was friendly, sharp, fast and clearly enjoying herself. It was a genuinely wonderful experience - everybody laughed a lot that day.

Michael Monahan. I've read many interviews and articles about you and about Vampira, but never really heard or read anything about the actual production of your show or the other people who worked on it.

Maila Nurmi. Nobody has asked. Nobody cares. Well, you care, but nobody seems to have cared till now. The director was Hap Wyman. You know, Hap for "happy?" (laughs) He probably should have been directing *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*.


Trey Stokes and Sandy Clark

And we had a brilliant script writer, Peter Robinson, who had been with the Bob and Ray Show in Chicago. He arrived here without a job, a family and no job. He saw the show, the first show we had, which was very bad because the writer was a piano player who wanted to try to write, and they said okay. And it was an embarrassment what I had to say. The first two weeks were very bad. But Peter Robinson saw the show and wrote in with a script. He said, "That's a character without a script, and here's the script I'm suggesting." So he came on board, and he was a brilliant writer. That was so lucky. He did the third show for us right away.

The lighting man was an 18-year-old boy who had apprenticed with a very old man who was still using flash powder. This was his first job, where he was on control of the camera, himself, and the lighting.



And we filmed ... this is the most amazing thing that no one has ever said ... in the same studio where they filmed *The Jazz Singer*. That was our studio. Now that's a big one for you, no one knows that. My then-father-in-law, Chuck Reisner, said, "Oh, so you have a job, you have a TV show. Where are you filming?" And I said, "At Prospect and Talmidge at KABC." And he said, "Oh, that's where we filmed *The Jazz Singer*." He was the assistant director.

The studio at that time had these little bungalows, and this one big barn-shaped building with rafters upstairs, like a hayloft. That's where my first pin-up layout was taken, in that hayloft. And that's where we filmed the show.

Sandy Clark. Tell me about the routine for the show. You had a writer – so he'd write scripts and you'd rehearse?

Maila Nurmi: No. They liked his writing so much they had him writing 11 shows a week. I'd get my script when I arrived at the studio. The director would say, "Use your marks" and "...a little guillotine; don't cut your fingers off" and "This light here." And I'm doing that, and then there's the TelePrompTer ... I was named the best female TelePrompTer reader in America. Bob Montgomery was the best male.

But I was really doing cold readings. You have to have someone who senses your timing, the one who runs the TelePrompTer. And of course Vampira could lounge and glance at the script. And then she would muse some more ... and then slowly say it. Because of the tempo, she could take her time, you know, to do a cold reading and not make it look like a cold reading.

And I had to make my own props. I'd get a notice about the middle of the week from the studio: "We're going to need this, that and that." I modeled hats one time and I had a bandaged head with an arrow through it. "This was made by Bauer and Bauer. Suitable for archery matches." (laughs) Things like that. I was a one woman *Saturday Night Live*, that kind of comedy.

Sandy Clark: Was there ever any input or collaboration on your part in terms of scripts? Did you come up with any ideas?

Maila Nurmi. Peter Robinson said, "If there's anything you want to say, just go

... continued on page 20

Fun Fact: *Maila Nurmi holds the record for thinnest waste according to the Guinness Book of World Records. It measured an amazing 17".*



States flying in - including Alaska's only horror host, Wolfman Mac - and the UK's Nina (Rachel Grant) who is about to host the relaunch of *Ripley's Believe it or Not!* in London! The only sadness came at the news that Sammy Terry, whose health is in a consistent state of questionability, was unable to confirm prior to the event (or this article).

While not official, we have also been at work trying to convince the *Guinness Book of World Records* to recognize this gathering as a significant event worthy of being immortalized in their records! No confirmation has been given from Guinness as of press time, we have approached this gathering as a true world record - signifying this class of horror hosts - in the year of 2010 - the largest collection of their kind ever assembled. Could this record ever be broken? It's up to the fans and the hosts, who have bent over backwards to make this happen! Check out full coverage of this event in the pages of *HorrorHound #23* - in stores this April/May 2010 - for a full list of all hosts who did in fact attend. Until then, we present a guide to the announced hosts, those who put their time and effort toward attending this great event. Hopefully they all made it, and everyone who holds this magazine even scored a few autographs while they were at it!


Chester Woof
New Ghoul Review



The Cool Ghoul
The Cool Ghoul Show
www.ghoul.tv


Count Gore De Vol
Creature Feature
www.countgore.com/gore


Count & Countess Gregula
Count Gregula's Crypt
www.count-gregula.com


Count Midnight ®
Monster Party
www.countmidnight.com

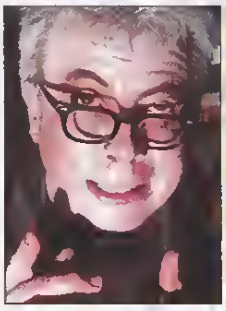

Dr. Ivan Cryptosis
Saturday Night Frights


Dr. Sarcofiguy
Spooky Movie Television
www.johndimes.com

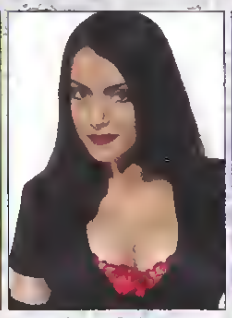

Dr. Shocker
Dr. Shocker's Halloween
Spooktacular Live Spookshow


Dr. Sigmund Zoid
Alternative Realities
www.alternativerealities.tv

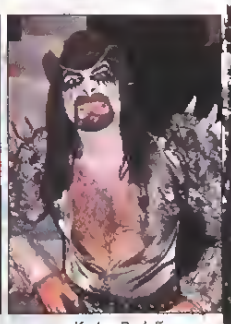

Dr. Tarr & Prof. Fether
Psycho Cinema
www.tarrandfether.com


Gunther Dedmund
The Basement Sublet
of Horrors


Helena
Hussy of Horror
www.hussyofhorror.com


Ivonna Cadaver
www.ivonnacadaver.tv

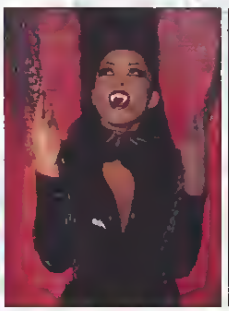

Joe Bob Briggs
Joe Bob's Drive-In Theater
TNT's Monstervision

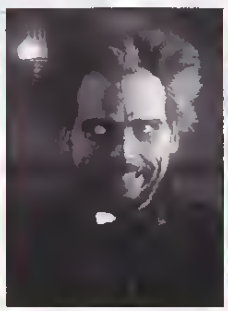

Karlos Borloff
Monster Madhouse
www.monstermadhouse.com


The Ghouligans Super Show
www.theghouligans.com

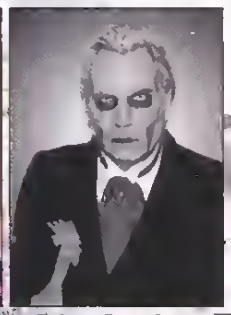


Nightshadow
Horror Kung-Fu Theatre


"Nina" Rachel Grant
Sci-Fright


Drmon Grimsby
Monster Creature Feature


Penny Dreadful
Penny Dreadful's Shilling
Shockers


Professor Emcee Square
The It's Alive Show
www.theitsaliveshow.com

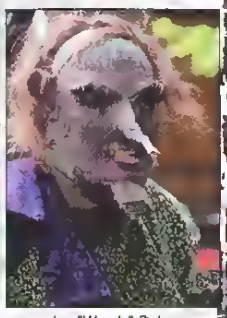

Midnite Mausoleum
www.midnitemausoleum.com


Uncle Eerie Shivers
The Shiver Show
myspace.com/uncleeerie


Uncle Roy Hoggins
Uncle Roy's Stink-O-Rama

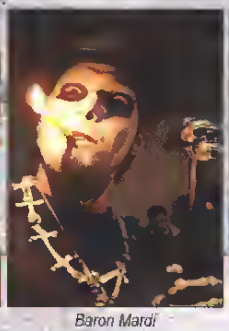

Undead Johnny
World of the Weird
Monster Show


Wolfman Mac
Wolfman Mac's Chiller Drive-In
www.nightmaresinema.com


Joe "Woody" Daken
Atomic Age Cinema
Dark Carnival



A. Ghastly Ghoul
The Ghastly Movie Show



Baron Mardi
Atomic Age Cinema
Dark Carnival



Baron Von Wolfstein
Saturday Night with
the Monsters



Basement Boy
Atomic Age Cinema
Dark Carnival



The Bone Jangler
The Bone Jangler Show
www.thebonejangler.com



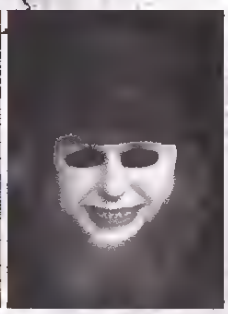
Count Victor Von Scary
Fridaynight-Frightnight
www.fridaynight-frightnight.com



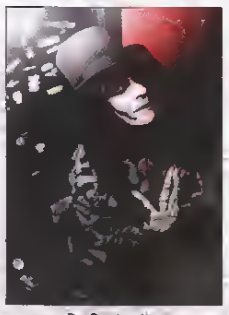
Doktor Goulfinger
The Hip Crypt



Dr. Calamari
Atomic Age Cinema
Dark Carnival



Dr. Creep
Shock Theater



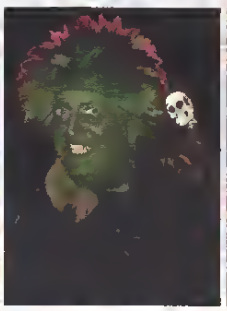
Dr. Destruction
Crimson Theater
dr-destruction.tripod.com



Elvira
Movie Macabre
www.elvira.com



Evelle LeChat
Night-Fnghts
Classic Horror



Freakshow
Bordello of Horror
www.madisonhorror.com



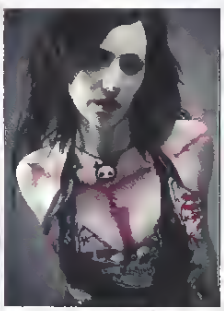
Ghouligans
The Ghouligans
Super Show



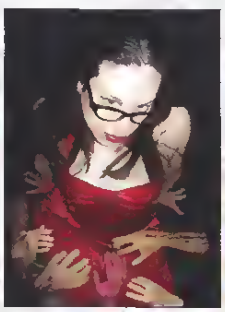
Gunga Jim
Gunga's Drive-In
www.serousweirdness.com



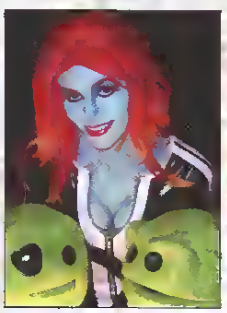
The Late Dr. Lady
The Late Dr. Lady Show
www.thelatedrladyshow.com



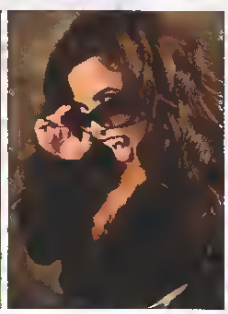
Marlena Midnite
Midnite Mausoleum
www.midnitemausoleum.com



Miss Misery
The Last Doorway Show
www.thelastdoorwayshow.com



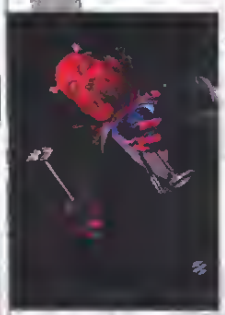
Ms. Monster
Hel on Ice
www.msmonster.com



Ms. Vampy
www.msvampy.net



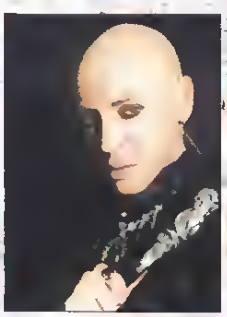
Karlos Borloff's Monster Madhouse
www.monstermadhouse.com



Reverend Billy Zebubba
Knuck-N-Futz
Live Spookshow



Reverend Polypus
Atomic Age Cinema
Dark Carnival



Master Ron Fitzgerald
Fitzgerald's Realm
www.fitzgeraldsrealm.com



Son of Ghoul
The Son of Ghoul Show
www.sonofghoul.net



Spooky Brucey
Shock Theater
www.spookybrucey.com



The Late Dr. Lady Show
www.thelatedrladyshow.com



In HorrorHound #21 we featured an amazing look back at the history of horror hosts - from Vampira to *Mystery Science Theater 3000* and everything in between. Written by Michael Monahan, a specialist when it comes to hosting history, one of the biggest problems was restraining ourselves to the just-under-100 hosts featured in the meager four-page article. Especially considering Michael had been hard at work with the folks from Dark Carnival Film Fest and *HorrorHound* to present a special Vampira Horror Host Tribute event - where we invited as many hosts as could possibly fit within the *HorrorHound Weekend* event - to celebrate the profession in style. Over 75 hosts, cast members and professionals took us up on the offer and the first and only gathering of this magnitude was underway!

While several of the hosts making their way to this amazing event have worked the show in the past (including Dr. Creep, Gunga Jim, Dr. Calamari and Woody the Clown) we added so many amazing new names in the months leading up to this event - including Ms. Monster, Joe Bob Briggs, Monster Madhouse, Count Gore De Vol, the Ghouligans and the Late Dr. Lady! Even, hostess with the mostess Elvira was eager to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Heck - we have horror hosts from outside of the continental United



Photos provided by Michael Monsha



Photos provided by Michael Monahan


HORRORHOUND
WEEKEND

right ahead and slip it in." I rarely did, occasionally I did. But my husband sometimes wrote special material for me, like when I went to the Miss Rheingold contest (a Rheingold's Beer sponsored beauty pageant). You know, they used these Irish colleens and one – they all looked alike – would win. Very wholesome, they looked about 17 or 18, and they looked very Irish, just little colleens.

So I went in full drag, with the vulture hat and carried a gold-headed stick. I was at the tail end; all the ladies had passed in their bathing suits. Then I passed the judges and I said – my husband had written this for me – "Gentlemen, I seem to be suffering under a grave misapprehension. I had thought Rheingold's Beer would be at the center of a Wagnerian funeral." Well, they were stunned. They didn't know what to make of it. It was early on yet, and nobody really knew who Vampira was. So he wrote that little piece for me.

Our producer was also pretty bright, Huntz Stromberg. He was good about press agentry. He wanted me to jump out of a helicopter with a black parachute, but I wasn't going to risk my life.

Sandy Clark: Do you think any of that footage exists at KABC? Do they still have anything?

Maila Nurmi: They threw it all away when they boycotted me. But there were nine shows on one big disc (reel), and they gave that to UCLA. And then, two years or three years ago, they were going to have a few minutes of me on the news. So they sent for the thing and looked at it, let's say on a Tuesday, and the next day they were going to air it. When tomorrow came, it was missing. It has been missing ever since, as far as I know. Nine shows. But some people say they have seen them. I think they may have just seen the couple minutes that are on the news reel. There was also an eight minute piece that was made as a sample that was sent back east to show what had been done here. That's without sound effects, without the dry ice, and so without a lot of the visuals. It was not a true rendition of the show. The shows themselves do exist ... somewhere.

Sandy Clark: They may have had a grudge against you, or were blacklisting you, but they did this to everyone eventually. They threw everything away. Do you feel like something was lost when these shows were tossed out? Do you feel that, nationwide, they threw away a piece of history at that moment? I know for you personally, but did you have a sense of a greater loss around that?





Maila Nurmi: I'm not sure I'm that impressed by the idea of cultural hallmarks or that kind of thing. I don't [know] much about culture, I just did it [laughs]. But I do feel, because I've always loved fashion ... when I was five years old, I was already making movie star dresses for the dollies, little white satin evening gowns for them to wear to premieres. They were two for a nickel. That was in Cleveland. We were living in Cleveland and my girlfriends had celluloid dollies. They were little pot-bellied Clara Bow dolls. You know, with the little hairdos ... Marcel. And I made little tiaras for them and glued them on with gum. And the evening wrap, the little vermin wrap, they could get for ten cents. But I was always making things for premieres. By then, I was Hollywood stuck. I didn't speak English then. But I saw the magazines, I saw the pictures.

Sandy Clark: Were you ever afraid that you might have pushed it too far? Did you ever look at something and think, "You know, this might be pushing it over the top?"

Maila Nurmi: Twice. I did a live show at the Pan Pacific, and little teenage girls came and said, "Oh, we have a fan club," and I had so many fan clubs all over the world. And they said, "Oh, the terrible things we have to do to get into the club!" And I suddenly realized I was inspiring young people to do bad things. I wanted to quit. I didn't, but I struggled with myself and worried about it.

And then about a year later, I was doing a glamour shoot in a cemetery. You know, cemetery cheesecake. And the photographers had set up by an open grave already dug for a funeral. They had set up a lot of chairs. The photographer had me sit there and said, "You're the only person who came to your own funeral, and you're mourning yourself."

I'm sitting there mourning myself, but then the people who were going to bury an Asian man, a daddy, came. Little children came, and they were supposed to attend their father's funeral. But instead they came to me. They want-

Did You Know? *After The Vampira Show ended, Maila went on to appear in Ed Wood's Plan 9 from Outer Space. Tim Burton captured the filming of this movie in his 1994 feature, Ed Wood.*



ed to be with Vampira for the autographs. They wanted to see Vampira. They didn't even care about their daddy who was going away forever. It was awful. And that's about when . . I was blacklisted anyway. I might have quit, if they hadn't blacklisted me then. I might have laid it down for awhile anyway.

Michael Monahan: What was your most satisfying work outside of Vampira, dancing, painting?

Maila Nurmi: Must I confine it to the arts? The most satisfying thing was being a cigarette girl. I would design my own makeup, write my own dialogue, pick out my own phone numbers, flirt with the greatest guys in the place, hear music all night and hide tips in my bra. I loved it. I was a cigarette girl in New York City, inhaling all that smoke for free [laughs]. I loved that.

Michael Monahan: That's great, and it underscores a certain New York style of sophistication you brought to Vampira. You earlier mentioned the "New Yorker crowd." There was a genuine East Coast sophistication in Vampira, as well as real darkness. She did not always seem to be playful.

Maila Nurmi: Well, I didn't go to finishing school. I was a pauper during the Great Depression, an immigrant, an immigrant pauper and a child with low self-esteem. But I aspired to appear genteel and well read. So what I did was, when I first got to the big city, I went to work in hotels where wealthy people lived, so I could learn their demeanor by association. That was my finishing school. I was the first female bellhop in New York City, photographed on the front page of the old *New York Sun*. That was in the New Western Hotel. And I met the Roosevelts, and I met the Rockefellers.

I worked in a private club for the social register, as a cigarette girl. That was on the East Side, the Upper East Side. There they wanted the girls who were actresses and could put on the proper Mid-Atlantic accent, as they sold them tobacco.

Michael Monahan: Did you feel more at home on the East Coast than the West? There's a real difference, culturally, between New York and Los Angeles, in terms of theatre and such. Did you have a preference?

Maila Nurmi: Yes, when I was young, I certainly did. I didn't read, but I looked at the pictures, and I aspired to the elite and the effete. As a young adult, I just aspired to be very glamorous and very grand, everything I wasn't. We sometimes do that. But then as I matured, I preferred the earthiness of the West Coast. I liked the reality of being . . . a beach bunny.

Michael Monahan: It's more bohemian.

Maila Nurmi: More bohemian, yeah. When I first went to New York, I was an existentialist, that's what we were called. Then I was a bohemian, and then I became a beatnik, and then I became a . . . punk rocker [laughter], Helen Heaven, the punk rocker.



I was a pioneer in so many things I did, apparently – like the first female bellhop. That was during the Second World War, when women had not done those jobs that were always customarily given to men. We had the first female bartender, then the the first shoeshine woman. I was neither of those, but I was the first bellhop. I carried the Roosevelt's baggage, Franklin, Jr.'s and Eleanor's. They paged me from the desk and I went up to the residential part of the hotel to get a bag, and it was him and his mom. And he had a two-suiter, this one two-suiter, with nothing in it. I could carry two over night things full of stuff, 'cause I was very strong. I picked up this little two-suiter and he took it away from my hands. And mother said, "Franklin, allow the young woman to earn her livelihood." And so he did, he let me carry it all the way to the elevator. Then he took it away again, he couldn't bear it [laughter]. I remember that. We are prone to remember things that impress us, and I was very impressed by Eleanor. She was my heroine.

Michael Monahan: The popularity of the horror host has gone through a number of cycles. Was there ever any temptation on your part to return to the genre at some point in the '60s or '70s?

Maila Nurmi: No. I had intended to recreate Vampira when I was ready for retirement and I wanted to make some money. I thought by that time that the blacklist would have been forgotten, the people would all be dead who hated me. I took the blacklisting very seriously. I believed I must have done something wrong, because everybody hates me. I didn't understand the nature of it, that it was just somebody else's greed. I just thought it was somehow my fault, and I recoiled and hid for many years. But finally I thought, "I own Vampira," I kept the control. Now I can bring it back and syndicate it in 1980 and start it." I took it to KHJ and they stole it – and hired somebody I don't approve of.



I didn't want to do it myself. I wanted to find a person and train a new girl, because I want Vampira always to be beautiful, never older than mid-30s. I can see something contemporary about Vampira. They've painted her on toilet seat covers and put it on eBay, and I've been asked to pose with the Dali Llama. From toilet seat covers to the Dali Llama – and everything in between. [laughs]

Fun Fact: *On top of 1959's "Plan 9," Maila also appeared in such films as Too Much, Too Soon (1958), The Beat Generation (1959), The Big Operator (1959), Sex Kittens Go to College (1960) and The Magic Sword (1962).*

George A. Romero's

DAY OF THE DEAD

25 YEARS SINCE THE END OF THE WORLD!

By Kenneth Nelson with Nathan Hanneman

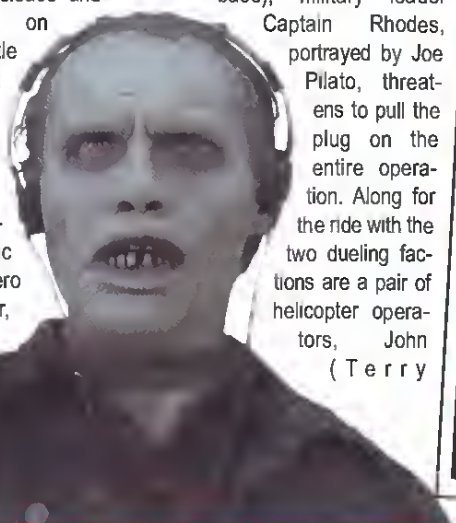
In 1985, George Romero took horror fans out of the night, beyond the dawn, and into the darkest day of horror the world had ever known with the release of the third film in his "*Dead*" franchise, *Day of the Dead*. This entry abandoned the farmhouse of *Night of the Living Dead* and the shopping mall of *Dawn of the Dead* for a much bleaker locale inside an underground military facility – and the tone of the film certainly matched its central location. Whether a reflection of the political atmosphere of the time or a reaction to the difficulties Romero faced while bringing his original vision to the screen, one thing was clearly evident – *Day of the Dead* was a much grimmer interpretation of the zombie outbreak than what horror fans had seen before.



Originally conceiving the idea after realizing he had made one zombie film in the '60s and one in the '70s, writer/director George Romero decided to write yet another zombie picture for the 1980s, unable to avoid the lure of using the undead as a metaphor to tell a story ripe with social and political satire. The result was an epic script that intended to be the zombie film to end all zombie films. However, the powers-that-be would not finance Romero's phone book of a script since they felt it would not be financially sound to pour $7 million (the estimated budget) into a film that would be released unrated. Instead, Romero was given the option to tone down the content to an R rating (allowing for a wider release and less restrictions on advertising) or settle for half the budget for the opportunity to shoot an unrated picture. Unsurprisingly siding with preserving his artistic integrity, Romero chose the latter, necessitating a trimming of the script to its bare essentials. Gone were the swamps, chase scenes, zombie battles and the above ground camp/fortress. The budgetary restraints also resulted in a bevy of the effects sequences to be scrapped which makeup/effects artist Tom Savini had already held pre-production meetings to discuss.

With the scope of the film tremendously scaled back, the shooting script set much of the action primarily underground. The story of *Day of the Dead* focused on a group of scientists and soldiers who have holed up in subterranean military facility in Florida under the orders of whatever remnants of governmental structure still existed following the zombie outbreak. The scientists' aim is to study the zombie phenomenon, although their intents and methods vary quite differently. Sara, played by Lori Cardille, is intent on practical research methods which focus on what is causing the zombie outbreak, whereas her colleague Dr. Logan (Richard Liberty) aka: Dr. Frankenstein, is more concerned with determining what the zombies are and how they operate with the end-goal of controlling and domesticating them. As the discord mounts between the research team, the soldiers grow increasingly agitated by the lack of results being presented to them. Fed up with risking the lives of his men who are rounding up zombie specimens (which are kept in an underground corral adjacent to their base), military leader Captain Rhodes, portrayed by Joe Pilato, threatens to pull the plug on the entire operation. Along for the ride with the two dueling factions are a pair of helicopter operators, John (Terry







Fun Fact: *In Day of the Dead, Dr. Logan states that the undead outnumber human survivors at 400,000 to 1 – some theorize, based on that information, that roughly only 600-700 humans still existed in America.*



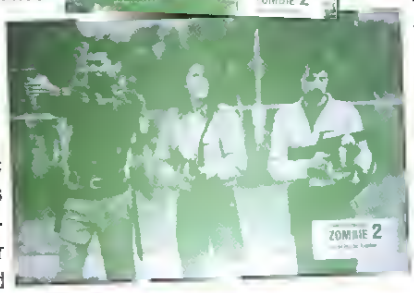
Alexander) and McDermott (Jarlath Conroy) whose opinions yet again differ from the other survivors, feeling that the zombie plague cannot be fixed and that their best bet is to fly away to an island and begin to rebuild society from scratch.

Coming as no surprise, Romero's third zombie film mirrors its predecessors in that the heart of the film is truly more concerned with the social interaction between people given the dire situation they are in rather than with the zombies themselves. However, heart is probably not the most appropriate word to describe this bunch of characters. One could make the argument that audiences connected with many of the human survivors in both *Night of the Living Dead* and *Dawn of the Dead*, the same is not necessarily true in "*Day*." The soldiers are comprised of foul-mouthed, unsympathetic characters with a disregard for human life and



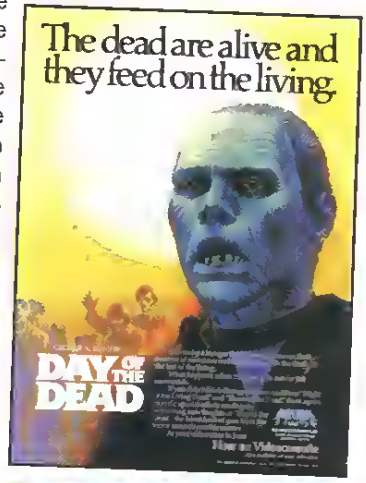


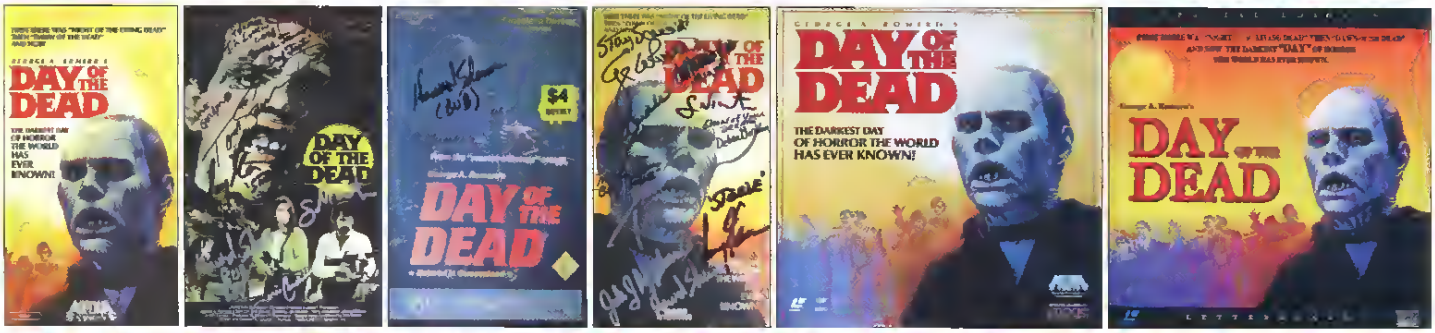




Dr. Logan is, for lack of a better definition, a mad scientist who mutilates the corpses of dead soldiers in the name of research. Sara, the film's lead, is the most sane of all the human survivors, yet she is portrayed as such a tough, ultra-strong woman that any emotional attachment is hard to come by on the surface.

For all of the dark shadows of humanity that Romero brings to light in *Day of the Dead*, one bright spot does manage to shine through – albeit through a walking corpse. Played with an infantile innocence by Howard Sherman, Bub the zombie is Dr. Logan's domesticated zombie in-progress and is, in many ways, more sympathetic than any of the humans in the film. Romero had certainly toyed with the idea in his previous zombie flicks that humans were more of a threat to each other than the zombies themselves. *Day of the Dead* takes this theme to the extreme and for the first time forces the audience's hand into rooting for the zombie – a drastically different concept beyond anything ever seen in a zombie film prior to this. Bub brought about an entirely new ideology to zombie folklore – evolution. He remembered aspects from his human life, prior to reanimation. He shaves, he salutes, he handles a firearm, and scariest of all, he learns. No longer were the zombies just flesh-eating ghouls ... now the zombies were just like us. Being a man who likes to make a statement with his gut-munching, it was no surprise that Romero depicted an evolving zombie while simultaneously highlighting the de-evolution of human

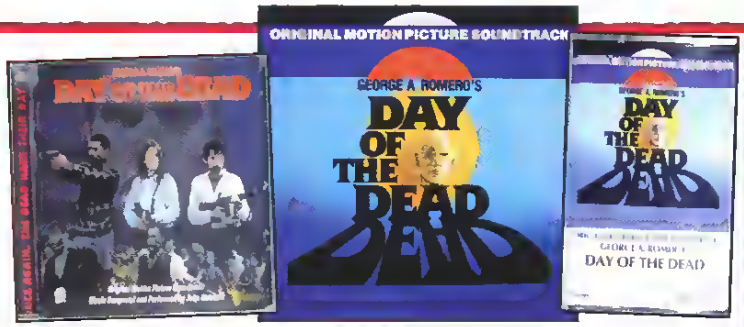






An archive of home video releases for Day of the Dead ranging from VHS, Laserdisc, DVD and Blu-ray from America and abroad. The UK Blu-ray included an accompanied comic book of Day of the Dead

Quotable Quotes: *"You want me to salute that pile of walking pus? Salute my ass!" ~ Joe Pilato (Day of the Dead)*

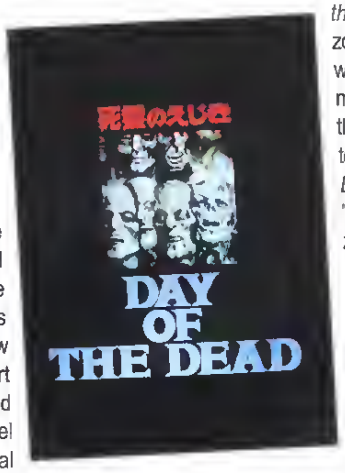


behavior in *Day of the Dead*.

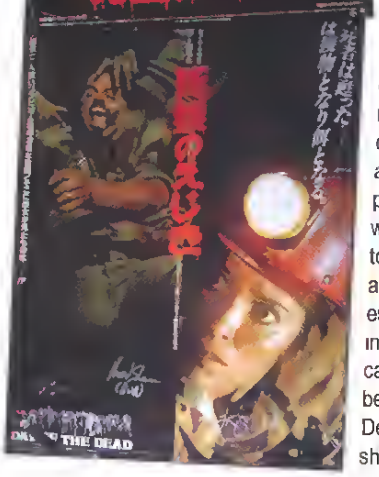
Not only were the themes darker in *Day*, so was the locale. Shooting in the underground bunker facility which served as the setting for the majority of the film took place just outside of Pittsburgh in the Wampum Mines even though the picture was supposed to be set in the Florida Everglades. Formerly an active limestone mine, at the time of shooting the facility had been converted to a long-term storage location for everything from film prints to boats. The underground premises even included a mushroom farm and a 27-acre lake - talk about diverse! The location certainly provided atmosphere; however, it was not always the most pleasant for the cast and crew. Since the film was shot in the fall, shorter days meant that much of the cast and crew went nearly a week at a time without seeing actual daylight as a result of the six-day shooting schedule they were on. A steady temperature in the mid-to-upper 50s was another unpleasantry, not to mention the musty smell of the mine as well as the limestone dust which nobody could avoid inhaling.



In stark contrast to the dark and dreary setting of the majority of the film, *Day of the Dead* is bookended by scenes shot above ground and in actual daylight. Toward the end of the film's shoot, the crew migrated down to Fort Myers, Florida and the nearby Sanibel Island – an actual island in the Gulf of Mexico just off shore of the peninsula. A much welcomed adjustment for many of the cast and crew, the refreshing experience was short lived as they would soon return to complete shooting in the depths of the Wampum Mine. The exhausted crew had been working for months, and it was no surprise that with the less-than-ideal conditions necessitated by the subterranean locale many began to come down with fevers and colds. At one point a local doctor was brought on set to tend to the abounding illnesses, reportedly seeing nearly 40 of the cast and crew members in his travels. Despite the hardships of shooting, morale on the set stayed predominantly positive, a testament to the dedicated attitude that many of whom were involved will tell you is the Pittsburgh way of filmmaking.

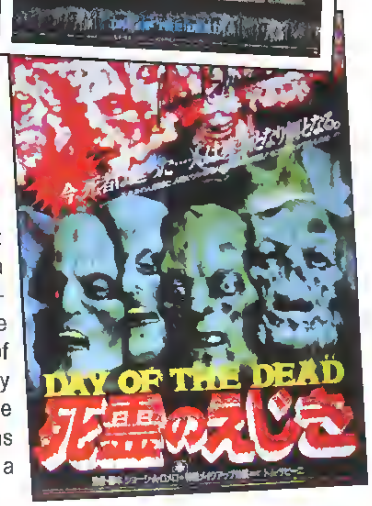












Becoming Undead

Aside from the metaphors and underlying sociopolitical messages, *Day of the Dead* was still a zombie film. Although the on-screen zombie time comes across as significantly less than what was seen in *Dawn of the Dead*, the zombies were certainly a major upgrade from the gray-faced undead walking around the Monroeville Mall. Yet another reflection of the darker tone in this entry of the franchise, the zombies in *Day of the Dead* were downright decrepit and scary. Since one of the "things to do" if you grew up in Pittsburgh was become a zombie in a Romero movie, there was certainly no shortage of the shambling dead to be found. People from all walks of life came out to try their hand at becoming a zombie including the Dean of Carnegie Melon University. As compensation for their time, zombie extras were paid $1 and were given a hat that said "I was a Zombie in *Day of the Dead*" along with an autographed copy (by Romero) of *The Dead Walk!* a newspaper from the film's introduction. Enthusiasm and effort engulfed the Pennsylvania extras – after all, this was a right of passage for them. The same could not be said for the zombie extras used to shoot scenes in Florida for the film's opening sequence since many of them apparently approached the experience as much more of a farce.

Did You Know? *In a bout of confusion, Day of the Dead was released to some countries as Zombie 2 (following Dawn of the Dead's retitle as Zombie).*



Many fans consider *Day of the Dead* to be the ultimate masterpiece of special effects icon Tom Savini. Surrounded with a large crew consisting of mostly young artists with specialties in everything from sculpting to makeup and so on, the team began working months prior to the shoot in the basement of Savini's home creating masks and taking molds of some of the lead actors in order to begin producing prosthetic appliances. A couple of the relatively inexperienced newcomers on Savini's crew, Greg Nicotero and Howard Berger would later rise to fame as the "N" and "B" in the name of the award-winning effects house KNB. However, before the Academy Awards, these gentlemen were part of the team developing some of the most impressive zombie makeups to ever grace the big screen.

Four different levels of zombies were created for *Day of the Dead*. Savini hired Terry Prince to create around 70 to 100 over-the-head zombie masks which were used for those undead shambling far in the background of shooting. Another set of zombies were created by the costume department utilizing hair color, makeup, and fake blood, resulting in the closest resemblance of any *Day* zombies to those in "*Dawn*." The next level of zombies, referred to by the crew as the "hero" extras, were made up with prosthetic appliances glued onto their faces. In fact, the appliances were pre-made in three different sizes (small, medium and large), so that when the extras arrived they would be fitted to whichever was the closest match to their facial dimensions. The last group of zombies were those that would be heavily featured up-close onscreen and were created with a combination of prosthetic appliances, makeup and dentures.

On top of the various zombie makeups created by Savini and his workshop, a multitude of complex effects gags were also developed for *Day of the Dead*. A magician of the screen, Savini utilized misdirection to create many of the film's most gruesome moments of gore. In one of the picture's most memorable effects shots, Captain Rhodes is literally torn to pieces by the zombies who have invaded the underground base during the film's climax. Actor Joe Pilato sat under a false floor, so that only his arms, upper torso, and head were above ground while a false body was sculpted, dressed, and placed in front of him on the floor to create the appearance that he was actually lying there. Cavities were prepared in the false body and filled with real pig intestines in order to create the illusion that Rhodes was actually being ripped to shreds by the undead. The intestines, which had been previously used in effects shots a couple weeks earlier, were stored in a refrigerator in order to keep them from spoiling. Unfortunately, someone unplugged the refrigerator at some point, allowing the intestines to warm up and emit a gut-wrenching, putrid smell. The show had to go on regardless, so the crew had to pull off the gag while working around the rotting stench of death, a task most unpleasant for Pilato as the intestines were placed merely inches away from him for the hours it took to set up and shoot the scene. The crew sprayed colognes and some even wore dust masks, but nothing they attempted could combat the stench. In fact, the rancidity nearly drove Pilato sick during filming.

Aside from the pig intestines used for the film's multitude of gut-pouring moments,





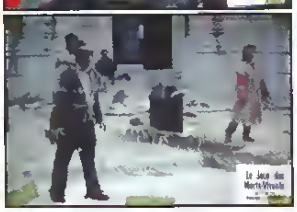


















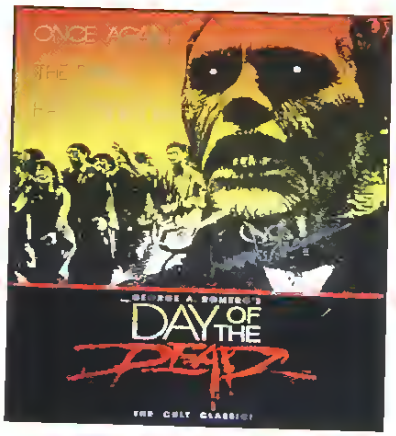


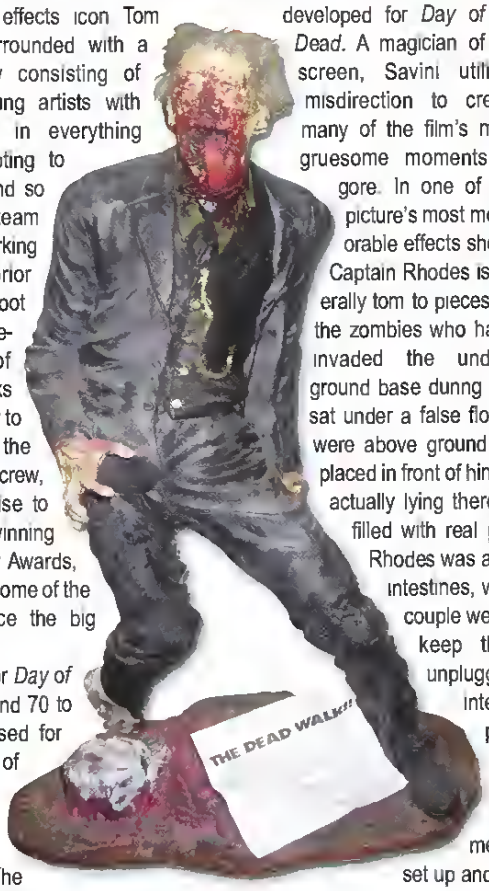




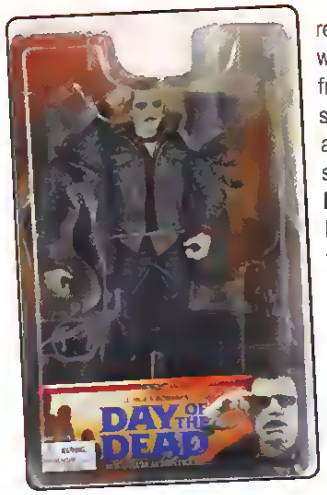




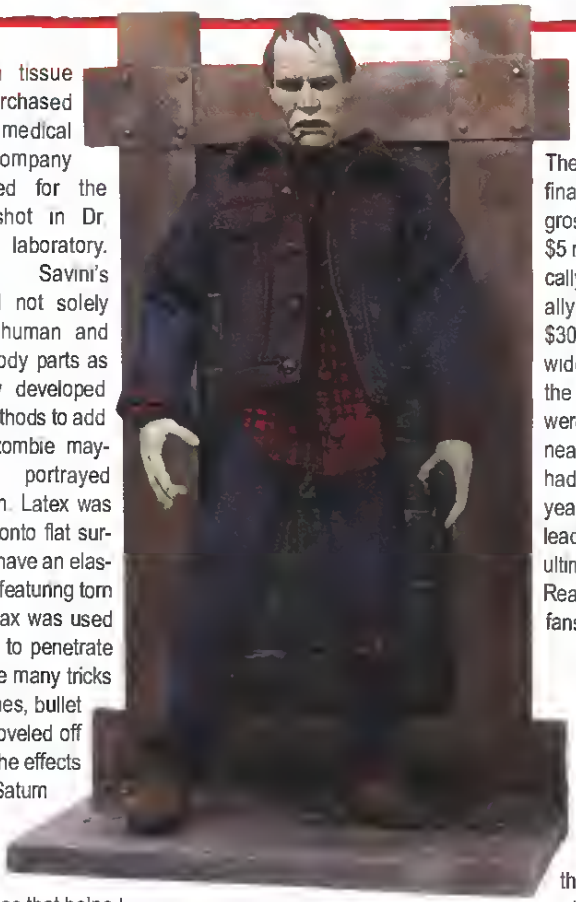




Quotable Quotes: *"I call him Bub. That's what the lodge fellows used to call my father. Can you imagine a surgeon called Bub?" ~ Richard Liberty (Day of the Dead)*



real brain tissue was purchased from a medical supply company and sliced for the scenes shot in Dr. Logan's laboratory. However, Savini's team did not solely rely on human and animal body parts as the crew developed other methods to add to the zombie mayhem portrayed onscreen. Latex was painted onto flat surfaces and then rolled up, so that it would have an elasticity that lent itself incredibly well to scenes featuring torn flesh from zombie bites, and mortician's wax was used on prosthetic appliances to allow weapons to penetrate body parts, just a few more examples of the many tricks the effects crew had up their sleeves. Gashes, bullet wounds, zombie heads both drilled and shoveled off – *Day of the Dead* was a true spectacle for the effects enthusiast and even earned Tom Savini a Saturn Award for his efforts.



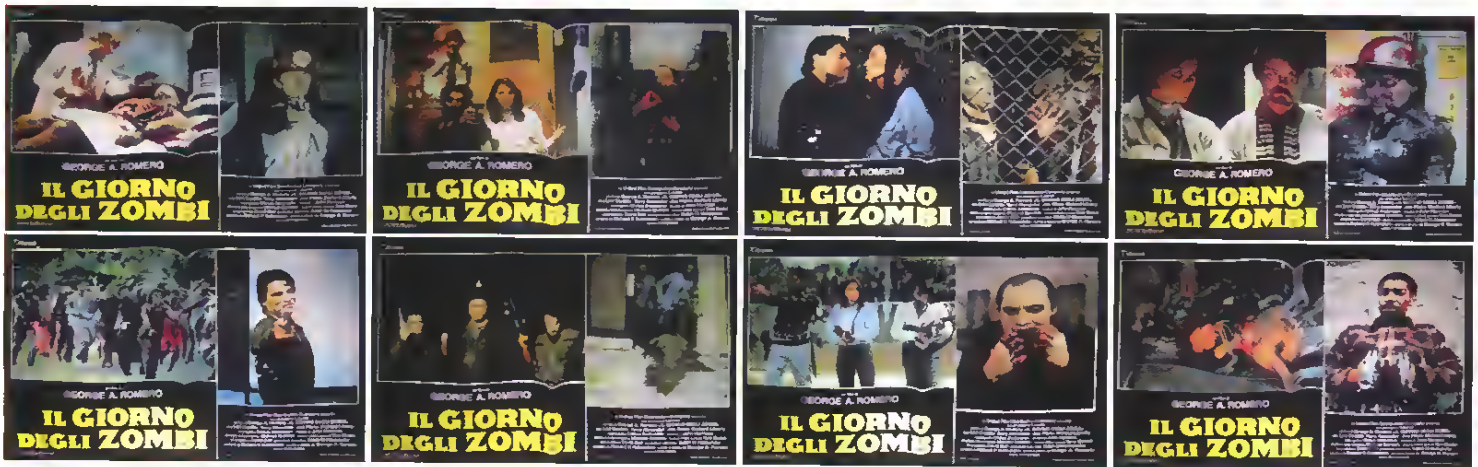
Finishing The Dead

The special effects were not the only piece that helped breath life into Romero's third zombie feature. In fact, one of the most essential elements would not be realized until post-production when composer John Harrison, who also served as first assistant director, created a score that perfectly accentuated both the action and tension being depicted on screen. The synth-heavy music mirrored the despair that was so critical to the picture's theme while simultaneously infusing pulsating beats as the action would build to a crescendo. To top it all off, Harrison infused tropical melodies, resulting in not only an emotional score, but an original one too.

With the sights and sounds now in place and the editing process completed, George A. Romero's *Day of the Dead* was given a limited theatrical release in the United States on July 3rd, 1985, expanding to a wider release just a couple weeks later on July 19th, 1985. The picture was a financial success, grossing around $5 million domestically, and eventually upwards of $30 million worldwide. However, the numbers weren't anywhere near what *Dawn* had achieved years earlier, leading many to ultimately view the film as a monetary let down. Reaction was mixed initially with both critics and fans alike. Many viewers were expecting another *Dawn of the Dead*, but were instead treated to a much more claustrophobic and nightmarish tale.



It may not have helped that Romero's film had the misfortune of being released in 1985 - a virtual uprising of zombie and gore films that were taking the world by storm, including such horror classics as *Return of the Living Dead* and *Re-Animator* (just to name a few) were penetrating theaters. Horror fans heralded the special effects and embraced Bub, but somewhat dismissed the storyline of the film, at least initially. In some ways, the film was hard to like with so many harsh, unsympathetic characters strewn throughout as well as an overwhelming sense of despair depicted by the film's heroes whom are left in a world with little hope to hold onto. These detracting attributes would eventually become celebrated and over the years, due in large part to its release on multiple home video formats, *Day of the Dead* emerged as a true cult classic of the zombie subgenre. Fans have grown to embrace the complex themes presented through the relationships of the characters and many, including the director himself, have christened *Day of the Dead* as their favorite Romero zombie film. Although Romero did not get to make the grand zombie epic he had intended, the final product is a concise exercise in the struggles of humanity



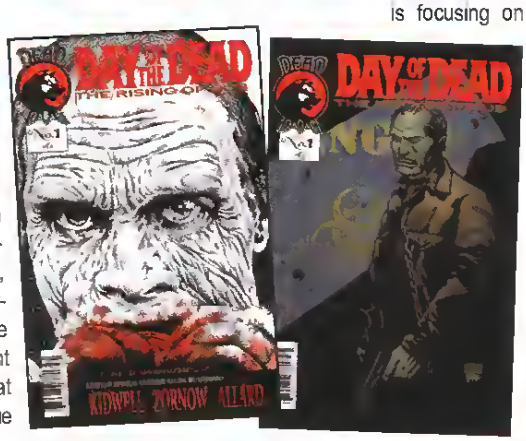
Quotable Quotes: *"The power is off on the mainland now in case you haven't heard, and all the shopping malls are closed!" ~ Jarlath Conroy (Day of the Dead)*



that still delivered the gory goods and is rightfully deserving of the beloved status it has developed over the last 25 years

Licensing the Dead

As with any classic horror title, fans eventually began to hunt down any potential merchandise spawned from this Romero zombie epic. With a definite lower-volume of memorabilia, *Day of the Dead* still hosts a number of regular go-to items for us collectors one-sheets posters, press kits, home video format releases (from VHS and Laserdisc to DVD and now Blu-ray), and soundtracks (LP, cassette and CD) were all released. In foreign markets there are plenty of posters, kits, lobby cards and press books to find. One of the most interesting items released for the US was a promotional coffin complete with the *Day of the Dead* logo etched/embossed in the cover In recent years, thanks to the influx of horror-inspired retail products (such as action figures, comic books and Halloween masks), it is no surprise that *Day of the Dead* has received all three style-product treatments Bump in the Night Studios released killer latex masks (available at major retail outlets) for both Bub and Dr. Tongue



(an amazing zombie achievement seen in the opening minutes of *Day of the Dead*, whose lower jaw is literally ripped off). Soon after Dead Dog Publishing released a comic book featuring the iconic Bub in *Day of the Dead: The Rising of Bub*. Although only one issue was released, it was one of Dead Dog's most memorable titles. In recent years, AMOK Time Toys unveiled a new toy line to include both 7" and 12" scaled *Day* figures While a 12" Bub has been announced and shown, only the 7" scale versions of both Bub and Dr Tongue have been released. It is very doubtful that more characters from this film will see product; however, as AMOK is focusing on other licenses (which ironically include both *Return of the Living Dead* AND *Re-Animator*). While killer horror merch is always in demand, considering the number of zombie films released in the past 40 years, we are lucky to have received such amazing products for a once-thought inferior Romero feature. Now 25 years after its initial release, the film has found its audience and is considered one of the best genre outings ever captured on film. *Day* never looked brighter!



*Special thanks to Landon Lee and Sean Clark for their assistance in creating this article.



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FANtasm COLLECTOR's SPOTLIGHT: Jeremy Morehead

This special Fantasm entry comes from Jeremy Morehead. As a kid instead of watching *The Never Ending Story*, Jeremy was watching *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. Now at age 24, Jeremy declares "I believe I am THE HorrorHound!" He continues, "I collect anything and everything horror. Most of my merchandise I've waited in brutal lines to get the actors/directors to autograph." Shown here are some pics of his collection, photos with celebrities and his killer *Dawn of the Dead* tattoo!

Send your Fantasm photos to mail@horrorhound.com for possible inclusion in a future issue or special of *HorrorHound*!



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Brett Wagner from The Crazies enjoys a recent issue of HorrorHound Magazine!



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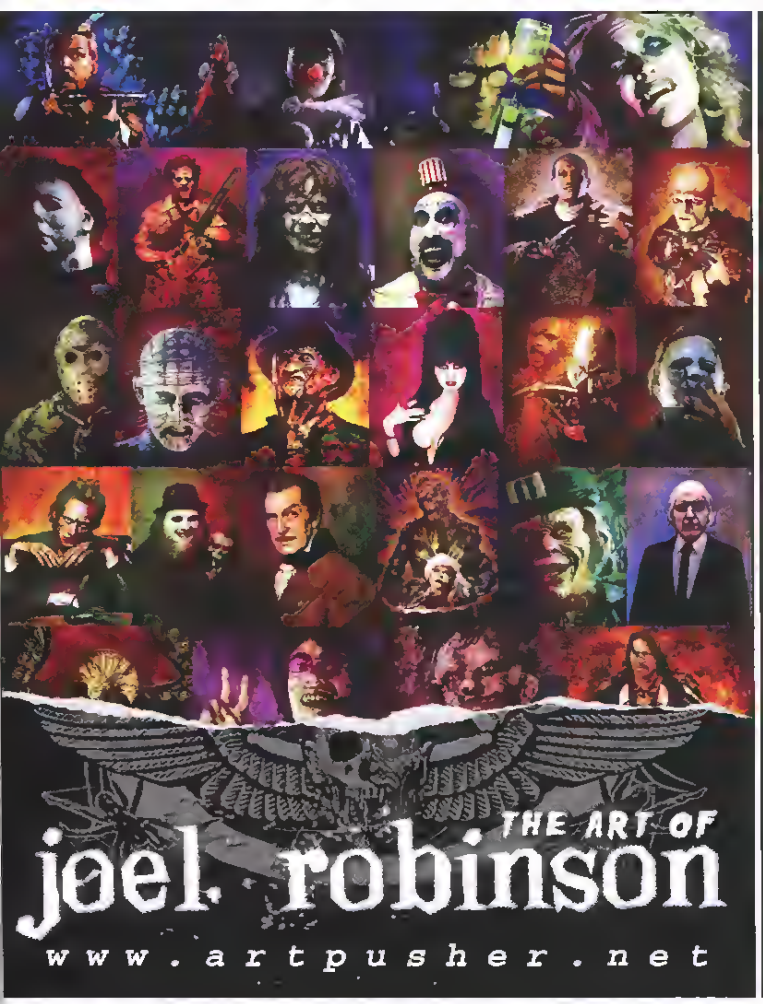
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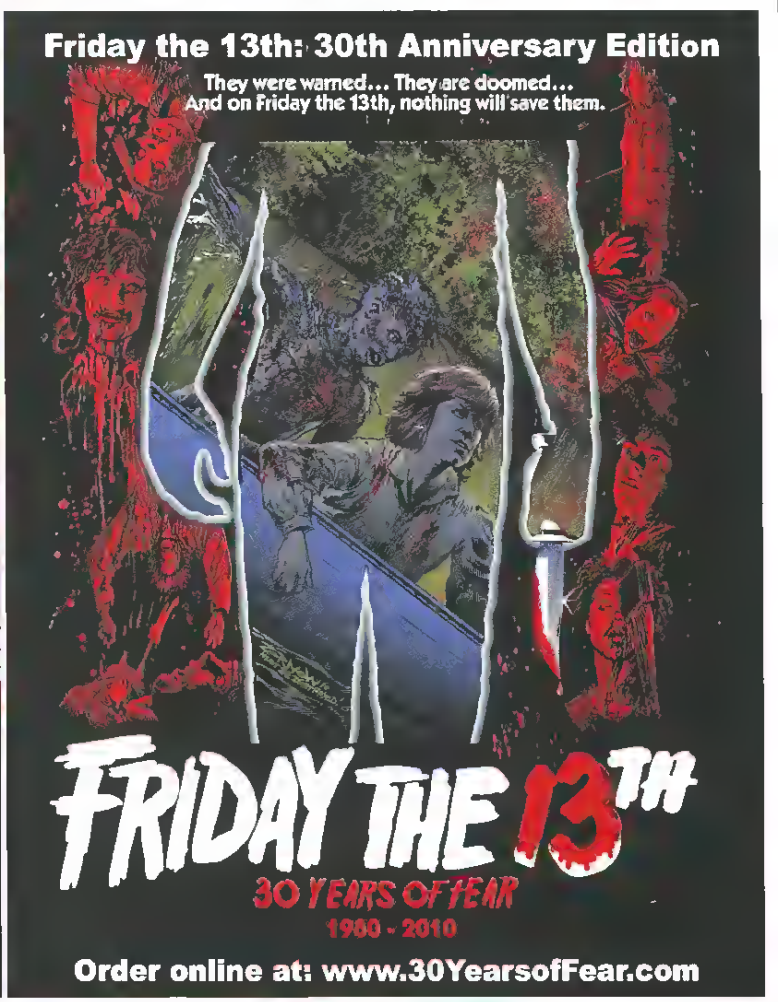
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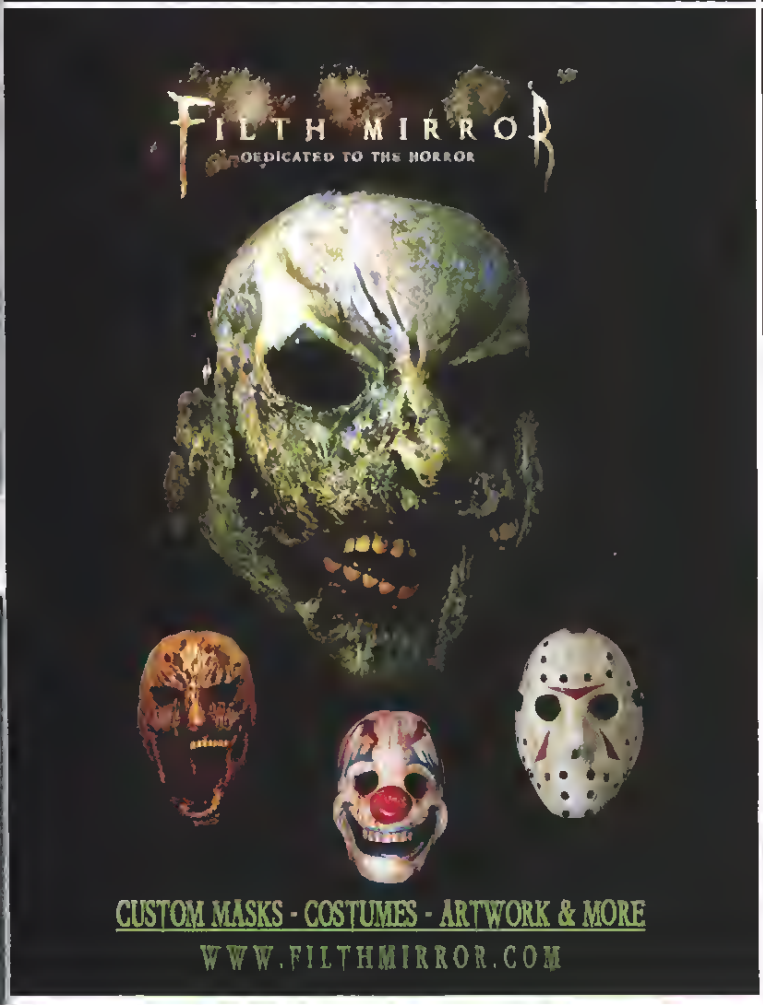
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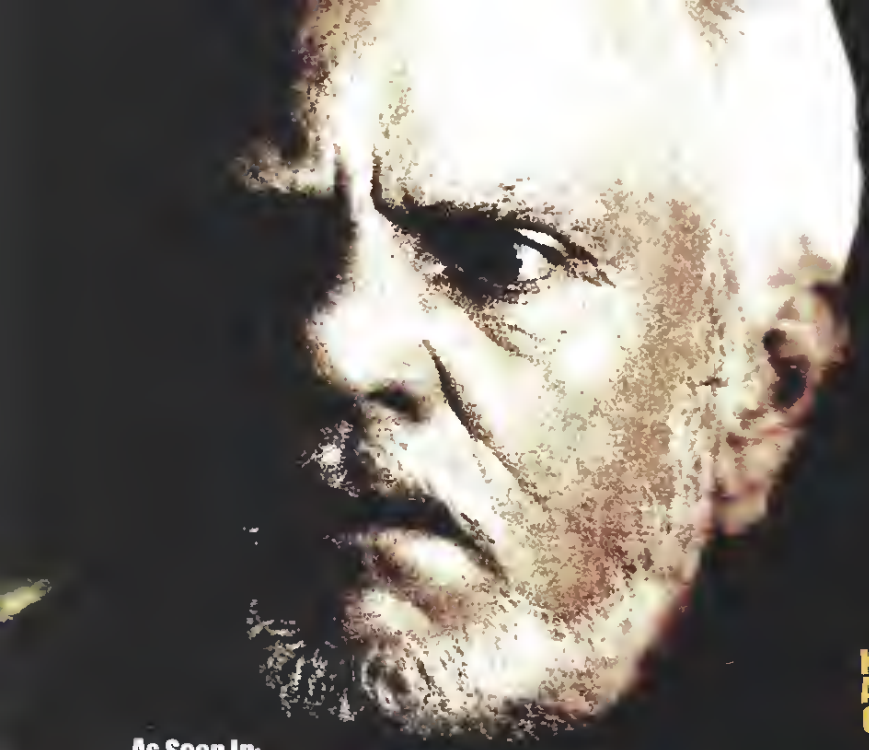
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